

Introduction

Mission

The mission of Community Diagnosis is to develop a community-based, community-owned process to:

- ❑ Analyze the health status of the community
- ❑ Evaluate the health resources, services, and systems of care within the community
- ❑ Assess attitudes toward community health services and issues
- ❑ Identify priorities, establish goals, and determine a course of action to improve the health status of the community
- ❑ Establish a baseline for measuring improvement over time

The Community Diagnosis Process

A simple definition used by the North Carolina State Center for Health and Environmental Statistics of a community diagnosis is “a means of examining aggregate health and social statistics, liberally spiced with knowledge of the local situation, in order to determine the health needs of the community”. Significant input from county residents is necessary to conduct a community diagnosis most effectively. The State has an abundance of data to be studied during this process, however the process can only be a success if there is community “buy-in.” Thus, the need for the formation and participation of a county health council is an important part of the process.

A community-based “Community Diagnosis” process should prompt the county health council to ask: Where is the community now? Where does it want to go? How will it get there? It is evident that the community diagnosis process and its outcomes should, at a minimum:

- ❑ Provide justification for budget improvement requests submitted to the State Legislature
- ❑ Provide to state-level programs and their regional office personnel information that fosters better planning, promotion, and coordination of prevention and intervention strategies at the local level
- ❑ Serve health planning and advocacy needs at the community level (Here, the community leaders and local health departments provide the leadership to ensure that documented community health problems are addressed)

The end result of the process will be a set of prioritized health goals and proposed interventions to address the needs of the community. The Tennessee Department of Health is committed to assisting communities throughout our state in finding the answers to these questions via the community diagnosis process. This document will explain the community diagnosis process and outcomes for Houston County. We also hope to give a historical perspective and details of the Council and its formation.